

**Town of North Smithfield Planning Board**

**Kendall Dean School, 83 Green Street**

**Thursday, April 4, 2013, 7:00 PM**

**The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.**

**1. Roll Call**

**Present: Chair Dr. Lucien Benoit, Dean Naylor, Mali Jones, Art Bassett, Gene Simone. Absent: Kerri Tunnickliffe. Also present were Town Planner Bob Ericson and Town Solicitor James Lombardi.**

**Mr. Lombardi left the meeting at 8:37 pm. Ms. Jones left the meeting at 8:43 pm. Mr. Bassett left the meeting at 8:56 pm.**

**Mr. Simone made a motion to rearrange the agenda to hear the Navigant application (originally item 3) before approval of minutes (originally item 2). Mr. Basset seconded the motion, with all in favor.**

**2. Navigant Credit Union Major Subdivision: Preliminary Plan with Public Hearing**

**Owner/Applicant: Navigant Credit Union, Location: 925 Victory Highway**

**Assessor's Plat 1, Lot 108, Zoning: BN (Business Neighborhood)**

Attorney John Shekarchi was present for the applicant. Project engineer Brian Brosnan, traffic engineer Robert Clinton, and land use specialist Ed Pimental were also present. Mr. Brosnan addressed the Board. He stated that at the Master Plan meeting in May, one of the stipulations was that the applicant provide a landscape buffer area between the parking area and abutting residential areas. The plan has been approved by DEM and submitted to the Board. He also stated that he had just received a report from the town's consulting engineer with ten comments. He said that he had quickly reviewed the report and comments and does not anticipate any major changes to the plan. The plan as presented to the Board for this meeting is an accurate representation of how it will remain, but the applicant will address the comments. He suggested that this can be a stipulation for approval. He briefly explained some of the issues, which included minor lighting spillover to the back of the building on the property to the east (physical therapy building). Mr. Ericson agreed that the potential spillover is probably not a problem, but he would like them to address and try to resolve the issue.

The Chair asked for details on the contaminants found in the ground and stormwater and what was done to mitigate the problems. Mr. Brosnan said that the property was previously owned by Mundy's flower shop and that pesticides were found due to the dirt floors in the greenhouse. He said that they did not penetrate the soil very deeply and were found within the first two feet of soil. They also found a buried 8,000-gallon home heating oil tank, which their

contractor removed. RIDEM is aware of both issues. Monitoring wells will be placed throughout the site and a plastic barrier will be installed two feet down in areas not covered by the building. The building itself is considered the cap for that part of the property. Clean soil will then be installed on top of the plastic cap. Infiltration will not be promoted in the capped area and subdrains will collect the water and be routed to the DOT drainage on Victory Highway. The Chair asked for test pit information to be submitted to the Board and Mr. Brosnan agreed to provide that data.

The Chair asked if there is an easement for the drainage pipe on the abutting property. Mr. Brosnan said that he does not believe an easement is needed nor that one exists, but also stated that no work will be done on the abutter's property. He added that DOT and DEM have reviewed the plans and had no comments, but he can follow up if the Board would like that.

Mr. Brosnan talked about the parking plan. Mr. Ericson had recommended that employee parking be located in the rear of the parking lot. Mr. Brosnan agreed that the rear spaces could be designated as employee parking and will include this in the letter that addresses how each of the conditions have been met. Mr. Simone asked how many employees would be working at Navigant. Mr. Brosnan estimated 8-10 employees and stated that seven spaces are located in the rear of the lot that will be designated as employee parking. There will be a total of 28 parking spaces, and Mr. Ericson

**stated that zoning requires eleven spaces. The Chair asked how snow will be removed or stored on the site. It will be plowed to the sides of the lot and if necessary, it can be trucked off site.**

**The Chair asked about water and sewer. Mr. Brosnan said that there is access to town sewers and there is a private well on the site. DEM has tested the well and determined it to be clean.**

**Mr. Clinton addressed the Board's questions about the traffic report. He stated that the plan has been designed to provide safe and efficient access to the site. He stated that credit unions are not heavy traffic generators. According to the traffic study, exiting the site will be a level of service C during peak morning hours, level of service D during peak evening hours, and level of service E at midday Saturday. Ms. Jones asked for more detail on the traffic, especially trying to turn left out of the site onto Route 102. Mr. Clinton agreed that it may be difficult, but there are gaps in the traffic due to the egress/ingress in the plaza across 102. Mr. Clinton also stated that traffic reports are overestimated and traffic levels may not be as high as in the study. He added that a center 12' turning lane might help, and this can be investigated with RIDOT in the future. Mr. Clinton also said that the second egress point onto Homecrest Ave has been eliminated to cut down on traffic using Homecrest as a cut-through route.**

**Mr. Naylor asked if the timing of the traffic light at Route 102/Route 5 would help with the traffic. Mr. Clinton said that the town could call**

**RIDOT and have them come out and fine-tune the timing. Mr. Naylor also asked if any studies are done post-construction and how accurate projections usually are. Mr. Clinton stated that in 99 percent of projects the actual traffic delays are less than projected in the traffic study.**

**Mr. Bassett asked about potential queuing of traffic on Route 102. Mr. Clinton explained how the site is designed to give plenty of room for cars to turn into the site and have any waiting traffic within the site rather than on the road. Mr. Clinton also described the adequate sight distance on both sides of the entrance.**

**Mr. Naylor made a motion to open the public hearing at 8:08 pm. Mr. Bassett seconded the motion, with all in favor.**

**Ray Sylvestre of Homecrest Ave. addressed the Board and thanked the applicant for working with him on traffic concerns. He asked about the oil tank that had been discovered on the site and expressed concern that pollutants may have entered his well, which is located directly across the street from the site. He said that he has been in touch with RIDEM, but he did not hear back from them in time to adequately prepare for this meeting. Mr. Sylvestre said that RIDEM will not test his well, but that he will pay to get it tested privately. The Chair said that he would keep the public hearing open in case Mr. Sylvestre gets any additional information before the next meeting. Mr. Sylvestre also asked if a “No Left Turn” sign could be installed to**

**block traffic from Massachusetts from coming down Homecrest. He said that he and the neighbors all think that would be a great idea.**

**Philip Godfrin of 47 Homecrest Ave. also addressed the Board to say that he applauds Navigant for their efforts and for eliminating the curb cut onto Homecrest. He said that he thinks that the credit union will impact the neighborhood less than Mundy's did and he fully endorses the plan.**

**Mr. Bassett made a motion to continue the public hearing to May 2, 2013. Mr. Simone seconded the motion, with all in favor.**

**Mr. Naylor made a motion to take a 5-minute recess at 8:31 pm. Ms. Jones seconded the motion, with all in favor. The Chair called the meeting back to order at 8:36 pm. Mr. Lombardi left the meeting at 8:37 because there were no other agenda items that required legal advice.**

### **3. Approval of Minutes: March 21, 2013**

**Mr. Simone made a motion to approve the minutes of March 21, 2013, as amended. Mr. Bassett seconded the motion, with all in favor.**

### **4. Capital Budget: Discussion, vote or other action on capital budget items for Police Department,**

**Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and School Department**

**The Board discussed the capital budget requests from the Police Department, which included three new cruisers and a copy machine. Mr. Bassett stated that the Board needs more information in order to recommend for or against these requests, including what the standards are for determining condition of current cruiser fleet, such as including the age and estimated life of the vehicle. The Board also discussed getting more information on the maintenance costs of the cruisers during the previous year and more information on how many vehicles are used at a time and how many vehicles are required based on the size of the police force. Mr. Bassett recommended capital budget preparation training and stated that he would like to work with the department on their requests, but more information is needed in order to properly assess whether requests should be recommended by the Planning Board.**

**Mr. Bassett made a motion that the Town provide training in capital budgeting and that there is insufficient information on the requests for the police cruisers and copy machine so the Planning Board is not able to determine whether or not to recommend these purchases at this time. Mr. Simone seconded the motion, with all in favor.**

**5. Slatersville pedestrian improvements: Discussion, vote or other action on possible RI**

**Department of Transportation pedestrian improvements in Slatersville, including the proposed**

**bridge.**

**Mr. Ericson gave a summary of the proposed bridge design and possible pedestrian improvements in Slatersville. RIDOT previously funded part of a 1994 Slatersville Area Plan. The Town and RIDOT then negotiated a 1998 memorandum of agreement to undertake a project that would make the village pedestrian friendly, but that work was never done. The Town gave RIDOT a bridge design concept that enhances historic preservation, shortens construction time, and decreases costs. Garofalo engineers did not develop cost estimates for the three alternative designs, but Alternative III will clearly have the lowest cost.**

**The Board discussed that the savings should be used for pedestrian improvements that will connect planned parking areas to the bridge and its scenic overlook.**

**Mr. Naylor made a motion that the Planning Board requests that RIDOT and the Town use the savings in bridge construction costs for additional pedestrian improvements, including walkways on both sides of the bridge, in the Slatersville Historic District. Mr. Simone seconded the motion, with all in favor.**

**6. Comprehensive Plan recommended Zoning Map changes: Section D 4.1, items 37, 47, 52 and 60**

**would down-zone four areas to Rural Residential Conservation (RRC,**

also known as REA-120).

Discussion, vote or other action under local ordinance regarding recommendations for changes to the Town Council.

The Board discussed recommended Zoning Map changes, including a request for property on Taylor Drive. Mr. Ericson said that Roberta Moneghan had created an alternative lot configuration that is an equivalent swap, but does not create pre-existing nonconforming lots. The Chair agreed that it is better not to create pre-existing nonconforming lots, but stated that deviating from the established Comp Plan disturbs him. He would rather have the Comp Plan revised first and asked if the Town Council was working on these changes. Mr. Ericson said that the proposed change is consistent with the Comp Plan but differs from what is currently proposed. He said that the Board could recommend that the changes be made or send it on to the Town Council and let them make the changes. The Chair stated that he would rather put the burden on the Town Council. There were no votes.

**7. Zoning Ordinance Section 17 review: Discussion, vote or other action under local**

**Charter/ordinance regarding recommendations for changes to the Town Council.**

The Board decided to hold this discussion at a future meeting.

**8. Planning update: Summary of new developments with Dowling Village tenants and traffic, planned bridge repairs, applications in process, and meetings schedule.**

**The Board briefly discussed Dowling Village. Mr. Ericson stated that Aldi had opened today. He added that the Dowling Village wind turbine project now seems less likely to happen. He is questioning its viability in light of the expensive Portsmouth turbine failure.**

**Mr. Ericson informed the Board that Walgreens is expected back for the May 2, 2013 meeting.**

**Mr. Naylor made a motion to adjourn at 9:20 pm. Mr. Simone seconded the motion, with all in favor.**

**Submitted by Angela Pugliese, April 24, 2013**